



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Division of Early Care and Education

ADMINISTRATOR'S MEMO

_____ ACTION
_____ X _____ NOTICE DECE 14-04

ISSUE DATE: 12/19/14

DISPOSAL DATE: None

To: County and Tribal Child Care Program Directors

From: *JNN* Judy Norman-Nunnery, Ph.D.
Division Administrator

RE: CY 2015 Child Care Administration Contract – Performance Standards

PURPOSE

This memo provides notice of the Child Care Administration performance standards for the contract period from January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015 (Contract Year). This Administrator's Memo applies to all county agencies, the Department of Health Services (DHS) Milwaukee Enrollment Services (MilES) unit and the Milwaukee Early Care Administration (MECA). This memo does not apply to tribes for federal fiscal year 2015.

BACKGROUND

Wisconsin Statutes ss. 49.155 (1m) and (3) require that the Department of Children and Families (DCF) contract for child care services with a county, tribe or other agency in each geographical region or tribal unit to determine eligibility and administer the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program. Under the contracts, counties and tribes determine eligibility for families seeking Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy and authorize child care payments for eligible children.

Effective in the 2013 contract year, the DCF set child care performance standards in consultation with county representatives of the Wisconsin County Human Services Association (WCHSA).

2015 PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

For the 2015 calendar year, the 2014 performance standards will continue unchanged. These performance standards address errors identified in state and federal audits with a goal to improve program accuracy and reduce Wisconsin Shares overpayments.

1) Obtain Social Security Numbers for Eligible Children

Under Wisconsin statutes § 49.82, all applicants for Wisconsin Shares must provide a social security number (SSN) as a condition of eligibility. In addition, children receiving Wisconsin Shares subsidy benefits must be US citizens or qualified aliens. The Legislative Audit Bureau auditors accept citizenship as verified when the automated interface with the Social Security Administration verifies the SSN for program participants.

Monthly Performance Report: The SSN Detail Report will identify shares-eligible children over three months of age without a SSN recorded in the CARES Worker Web (CWW). This report will be run on the week after cutoff and at the end of each month. The DCF will publish detail reports for children without SSN after cutoff and a SSN Summary Report at the end of each month to show the ratio of missing SSN for eligible children.

Performance Standard: At least 97% of eligible children older than three months of age will have an SSN entered in CARES.

2) Process SMRF during the month when due

The Six Month Review Forms (SMRF) must be completed by child care consumers and processed by the local agency. Processing of the SMRF is complex and error-prone. When the SMRF are processed late or inaccurately, the family's child care authorization may be stopped inappropriately. Once ended, the child care authorizations must be re-established by county staff retroactively. In these cases, Wisconsin Shares payments are delayed.

Monthly Performance Report: The Overdue SMRF Detail Report will be run monthly on the week after cutoff and at the end of each month. The end of the month results on the Overdue SMRF Summary Report will show the percentage of SMRF not processed in the month when due.

Performance Standard: The target error rate will be not more than 25% overdue SMRF at the end of each month.

3) Verify Activities to Prevent Shares Overpayments

Under Wisconsin Shares policy, local agency workers are required to verify that the parent is working for a qualified employer or is engaged in other qualifying activities before authorizing child care. The DCF will conduct an annual Targeted Case Review (TCR) to ensure that local agency workers document and establish appropriate child care authorizations. The TCR sample will include a minimum of five cases from each county and up to 850 cases statewide.

Annual Performance Report: Each year, the DCF will publish the TCR results for each county.

Performance Standard: The target error rate will be not more than 20% (1 in 5 cases) with an error related to qualified activities.

4) Customer Service – Manage Call Answer Time

Accurate child care authorizations depend on the parent's timely reporting of changes in approved activity and the worker's prompt action to change the authorizations. Under Wisconsin Shares administrative rule, parents must report employment or training changes to the child care worker within ten (10) days of the change. It is the worker's responsibility to verify eligibility requirements and revise the authorization for child care as appropriate.

Beginning in 2012, consortia call/change centers were established to handle client calls for economic support programs administered by the Department of Health Services (DHS). These call/change centers also serve the child care program.

When customers experience long wait times before calls are answered, call abandonment rates go up causing delays in change reporting.

Monthly Performance Report: Monthly call center statistics showing the total number of calls, average speed of answer, and average abandonment rates will be published for each county consortium, the MECA, and the MILES.

Performance Standard: The average speed of answer is not to exceed five (5) minutes and the abandonment/IVR rate is not to exceed 15%. The performance information obtained from this measure will be used to guide best practices in handling child care calls.

5) Identify Client Overpayments

Under administrative rule, all Wisconsin Shares client overpayments are subject to recovery whether caused by customer error, worker error or fraud. The DCF collects information related to the number of client overpayment claims for each county and the overpayment amounts that are subject to recovery.

Quarterly Performance Report: The year-to-date client overpayment information will be calculated as a percent of Wisconsin Shares subsidy for each county and published quarterly.

Performance Standard: The overpayment rate will be measured, but no performance standard will be set at this time. In the future, a performance standard may be tied to this measure or other corrective action may be required for counties that have high error rates cited in the TCR or other audits.

6) Average Timeframes for Child Care Processing (Not a Performance Measure)

Low-income families rely on timely processing of child care eligibility and authorizations to obtain and maintain employment. Wisconsin Shares policy establishes certain timeframes for application and authorization processing. *In 2015, these timeframes are not subject to performance standards.*

Average Timeframes Report: The DCF has developed a report to capture whether eligibility and authorization timeframes are being met by local agency workers. This report will be published on SharePoint for local agencies to review.

CHANGES EXPECTED FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2016

Timeliness of New Authorizations: The DCF is developing a report to capture whether eligibility and authorization timeframes are being met by local agency workers (number 6 above). In early 2015, the report will be published on SharePoint monthly for local agencies to review throughout the year. A baseline will be established and a new performance target will be set for calendar year 2016.

Accuracy of Authorizations: In anticipation of the Electronic Benefits Transfer-Parent Pay initiative (EBT-PP), the DCF will monitor the accuracy of authorizations by measuring the number of hours authorized compared to the number of hours used/reported by child care providers. This information will be published on SharePoint for local agencies to review during 2015. A baseline will be established and a new performance target will be set for calendar year 2016.

Customer Service – Manage Call Answer Time: The current performance standard related to Customer Service (# 4 above) is likely to change for 2016 because local agencies have recently integrated the child care calls into the consortia Call/Change Center menus. The DCF will work in cooperation with the DHS and representatives from the WCHSA to determine whether the current performance standard should be modified for 2016.

ACTION SUMMARY STATEMENT

- The DCF will publish performance standards reports monthly to show county-by-county performance summary data and provide technical assistance to local agencies as needed.
- Counties will review performance reports and take appropriate action to obtain missing documentation and verifications; and, take appropriate action to correct all errors found and recover any overpayments that are identified.
- The Department and the counties will work together to ensure the reliability of performance data and consider other initiatives that reduce error-prone practices and policies.

CONTACT:

Bureau of Regional Operations (BRO), Child Care Regional Coordinators. Contact information is located at: http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/regional_operations/default.htm